

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. Upon his return from Bogota on 21 February 1949, Calo Plaza Lasso, President of Ecuador, told a friend that he had discussed the matter of a secret military alliance with the President of Colombia. Plaza allegedly quoted President Ospina Perez of Colombia as saying, "The difficulties between Colombia and Peru can only be settled by force, and as Peru is a common enemy of Ecuador and Colombia, the two countries should join together on the issue". Plaza reportedly did not commit his country to any alliance, but agreed verbally with Ospina Perez's idea of a coalition. The Colombian President allegedly stated that he expected trouble from Peru, if not immediately, then as soon as a war had started between the United States and Russia.
2. Shortly after the above-mentioned conversation, the same friend of Plaza made the following statement which was reported because of the possibility that it may reflect Plaza's own views:

In the event Colombia and Ecuador became involved in a war with Peru, they would look to their sister Gran-Colombian country, Venezuela, to aid them in credits, arms, and supplies. It is also possible that Bolivia could be drawn into the affair on the side of the Bolivarian countries.

3. Prior to President Plaza's visit to Colombia, much discussion was given to a secret military alliance between Ecuador and Colombia. Several members of the General Staff of the Ecuadorian armed forces met privately with the Minister of National Defense in early February 1949 for the purpose of encouraging the Minister to prevail upon the President to discuss such an alliance with Ospina Perez. These officers, as well as high ranking officers in the Guayaquil area, believe that Peru would provoke attacks on both Colombia and Ecuador* in order to direct attention from her domestic situation and to gain territory,** and that Ecuador's defense lay in her joining forces with Colombia.
4. The Conservative Party of Ecuador also approved of treaty talks between the two presidents. On 9 February 1949 Rafael Florencio Arizaga, a Conservative Party leader and a member of the Junta Consultiva, stated that the Party had taken a favorable stand toward the authorization of Plaza to discuss a military alliance with Colombia, but that under no circumstances would he be allowed to conclude or sign any alliance for the Ecuadorian government without

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first complying with the constitutional requirements.

5. Plaza Lasso reportedly was not particularly enthusiastic about making a trip to Colombia because of the delicate political situation between Colombia and Peru. However, according to Clemente Yerovi Indaburo, Ecuadoran Minister of Economy, the Colombians insisted upon Plaza keeping his promise to visit their country because of their anxiety over forming a military alliance.

Comment. The subject of Peruvian attitude toward Ecuador has been an obsession for years in Ecuador and has been sharply accentuated since the rise to power of the present military leaders in Peru.

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